



Testimony of
Sal Luciano, President
Connecticut AFL-CIO

Judiciary Committee
March 6, 2019

SB 964 An Act Concerning Court Operations

Good afternoon Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom and members of the Labor and Public Employees Committee. My name is Sal Luciano and I am proud to serve as the President of the Connecticut AFL-CIO, a federation of hundreds of local unions representing more than 220,000 members in the private sector, public sector, and building trades. Our members live and work in every city and town in our state, and reflect the diversity that makes Connecticut great. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony today about our concerns regarding SB 964 An Act Concerning Court Operations. We oppose including any language into SB 964 that allows for privatizing court monitors, as the Judicial Branch has originally sought to do.

The Judicial Branch's original draft of SB 964 privatized the work of 300 court monitors, who are responsible for quickly and accurately recording and transcribing daily trial proceedings. We urge the Committee to continue to exclude such language. The information they record and transcribe is instrumental in protecting those who come before our court system. Their work product is essential to keeping our democracy functioning in a transparent and just manner.

Court monitors have a particularly important responsibility and their work should remain in the Judicial Branch. There, it can continue to be performed by highly skilled government workers who have earned the public trust and who can be held accountable to taxpayers. For-profit profiteers have no place in sensitive court proceedings where matters of justice, life and death are at hand.

Court monitors, mostly women, provide a valuable and necessary service in the judicial system. Their gender and the clerical nature of their work make them an easy target for discrimination. If their work disappears, there is little question that these 300 workers will lose their jobs when SEBAC layoff protection expires in 2021. That would be a mistake.

In order to protect the public trust of the judicial system, we urge the committee to exclude any language in SB 964 that permits or facilitates the privatization of court monitors. Thank you.